

Addendum No. 4 to RFP 15-63



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Purchasing
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

To: All Parties on Record with the City of Somerville as Holding RFP 15-63,
Powder House Community School Property Disposition and Redevelopment

From: Angela M. Allen, Purchasing Director

Date: March 6, 2015

Re: Questions and Responses – Post Site Visit and Briefing Session

Addendum No. 4 to RFP 15-63

Please acknowledge receipt of this Addendum by signing below and including this form in your proposal package. Failure to do so may subject the proposer to disqualification.

X

Name of Authorized Signatory
Title of Authorized Signatory

Addendum No. 4 to RFP 15-63

Questions and Responses

1. Q: How bidders may be affected by proposed zoning?

A: As noted in the RFP, it is the expectation of the Planning Staff that the zoning for this site will be created as an output from the public design process that will be conducted by the city and their selected partner. The proposed new zoning ordinance places this lot in the 'Civic' zoning district, as it does all city buildings of this type. The new zoning anticipates that any civic zoned lot that is sold for non-civic uses will be rezoned before the sale is complete. This is how this location will be done as well. The zoning under the current ordinance (RA) also does not allow most proposed projects to proceed. Therefore, it was always anticipated that this site would be re-zoned.

The new zoning draft expects that all projects in residential and mixed-use districts up to 4 stories, within close proximity to transit (like this site) will provide affordable housing at a rate of 14.28% (1 in every 7 units), and it is reasonable to expect a similar expectation in this case.

Please note that the proposed ordinance could change during the public hearing process for the overhaul, and therefore these districts and expectations could change. The applicant also must be able to effectively work with the City on a collaborative design process that builds support for the site-specific zoning amendment, and that amendment must be approved by the Board of Aldermen.

2. Q: Are the ENA and LDA exactly the same as the 2012 RFP?

A: No, the ENA and LDA have been updated to reflect the new RFP. Good faith deposit has been increased by \$10,000. The selected Partner will be required to deposit \$20,000 simultaneously with its RFP proposal without any obligation on the part of the City to pay interest thereon. The property shall revert to the City at no cost if Buyer does not break ground on the project by the third anniversary of the closing date and that 40% of the land area of the property be set aside as open space in perpetuity. The LDA and ENA are attached as Appendix F and Appendix G in the RFP.

The direct link is also provided below.

- a. <http://www.somervillema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/bids/packages/RFP%2015-63%20Powder%20House%20School%20Disposition-Redevelopment.pdf>

3. Q: Has the technical advisory committee been established?

A: Essentially we are using the same committee that was selected for the 2013 RFP, with the exception of the people that were appointed based upon the positions they held. Alderman Katjana Ballantyne will fill position for former Alderman Bob Trane.

Addendum No. 4 to RFP 15-63

Sunayana Thomas will fill the position previously held by Stephen Houdlette. If other community members express they do not wish to continue as a member of the Technical Advisory Committee, we will act accordingly, but otherwise it will be the same committee. Please DO NOT contact any appointed member of the advisory committee to discuss your proposal, either prior to submitting the proposal or during the selection process.

4. Q: RFP calls for a 1:1 parking ratio for residential. Given that the zoning has not been set would the City consider a range of parking options?

A: The City would urge everyone in their designs to provide responses to remain true to the design guidelines which have been developed by the community through extensive process.

5. Q: Where can we find existing building plans of the school?

A: The architectural plans can be found in the ESA Appendices on pages 634-720. It includes existing conditions, site details, building conditions, architectural, structural, and more.

The direct link is also provided below.

<http://www.somervillecityconnect.com/storage/powder-house-phase-I-and-II-esa-appendices-comp.pdf>

6. Q: Regarding the uses on the site; it is very clear about residential requirements regarding 35 units but what is not clear is the acceptable uses within the community such as a hotel. What can a hotel develop and could it be a viable use?

A: This application does not require full and complete designs of a project. We are focusing scoring on the skills of the design team, rather than any individual design proposal for the project site. Therefore, it is designed to reduce the cost to complete a response to the RFP in an effort to encourage creative ideas to be submitted for bids.

The hotel must meet the same maximum floor area and height as specified in Appendix E, but the number of rooms may be set based upon what reasonably fits in that building bulk.

7. Q: The guidelines do not refer to shared parking. If we reduce the overall parking by doing shared parking, would that be allowed?

A: Although it is not provided in the design standards and guidelines, we are commonly open to shared parking. We advise you to provide data and research on why it is more feasible to the community.

Addendum No. 4 to RFP 15-63

8. Q. We have spoken with several consultants regarding the fiscal benefit analysis requested by in the RFP. Many have expressed concern about the scope of work required to accurately access the cost or impact of a development on the city. Can the purchasing department provide some direction in regarding the scope and methodology of the study?

We don't expect applicants to hire a consultant for the fiscal impact work. Provide a basic estimate of value and property tax classification (residential or commercial) of the completed project, as well as the cost of any specific city services required by the project. Identify if the project provides local hotel or meals taxes. Upon submittal of all proposals, the city or their designee will adjust this information so that proposals can be compared against each other.

9. Q: Should bidders be taking the dimensional, usage and other requirements of the proposed new zoning ordinance into account in developing their projects? The RFP only mentions the old Somerville Zoning Ordinance uses and requirements; however, the proposed new zoning ordinance is different. Should bidders follow the terms of the RFP and only address the requirements of the old zoning? Should they address only the new zoning? Should they submit projects showing calculations and compliance under both the old and new zoning?

A: Bidders should work with the dimensional and use information set out in Appendix E of the RFP. To respond to the RFP, they do not need to be concerned at this time with the new or the old zoning. Bidders are also reminded that they are being asked to present preliminary plans. As the score sheet point totals show, it is far more important to have an applicant and design team that is willing and able to lead a community process than it is to have a refined project design in the RFP response. That design will inevitably change as the process evolves. But, any preliminary ideas in the proposal should focus on compliance with Appendix E, and not with the current or proposed zoning.

10. Q: In an answer to a prior question, it was stated by the city that "the new zoning draft expects that all projects in residential and mixed-use districts up to 4 stories, within close proximity to transit (like this site) will provide affordable housing at a rate of 14.28% (1 in every 7 units), and it is reasonable to expect a similar expectation in this case." Does this mean that the property will be in the 4 Story Mixed Use (4MU) District under the proposed new zoning ordinance? The 4MU, along with the Three Story Mixed Use (3MU) District and the Urban Residential (UR) District, are the only three districts with a 14.28% affordable housing requirement in a TOD area, and only the 4MU allows 4 stories. Should bidders design a project with that expectation? How can a bidder create a project without knowing which zoning district, or even type of district (residential, mixed-use, commercial, etc.), the city expects to exist at this location?

A: Bidders should anticipate that the city will likely expect an affordable housing rate of 14.28% (1 in every 7 units). This is similar to the regulation of the new 4 story mixed-use district in the proposed new zoning. But, bidders should not anticipate that they can build

Addendum No. 4 to RFP 15-63

out to the full extent of permitted buildings in the 4MU proposed district. Bidders should work with the dimensional and use information set out in Appendix E of the RFP. To respond to the RFP, they do not need to be concerned at this time with the new or old zoning.

11. Will the RFP be updated to replace the references to the old zoning ordinance with references to the new zoning ordinance?

A: Respondents to the RFP should focus not on the zoning but on the provisions of Appendix E.

12. Q: How long will changing the zoning district for this property take? It would seem to be something which would be done only after the new proposed zoning ordinance is implemented, or is it intended that the zoning for this property will be changed as part of the current re-zoning taking place now?

A: The proposed new zoning ordinance, if passed, will change the zoning on this site from a Residence A (RA) zone to a new Civic (CIV) zone. The civic zone is designed for public buildings and/or open space. The new zoning anticipates that any sale of a public site (like the Powder House School) will be followed by a robust public process to allow for the city and development partner to create a development that reflects broad community support. Then, development intensity can be formalized, through a combination of provisions in the LDA and regulations in a proposed new zoning district. When the Board of Aldermen approves the sale of the building, they can also approve a zoning amendment for the site at that time, and that amendment can be based upon the results of the planning process. This is what we anticipate will occur in this situation.

13. Q: Does the City have any guidelines for the calculation of the cost of municipal services or a methodology it recommends to calculate such costs?

A: We would like each applicant to provide their best estimate based upon what they believe to be an appropriate methodology. After responses are received, the City will review and refine these costs so that parcels can be compared based upon cost of services.

14. What does the city consider to be a "community improvement project"?

A: Community improvements include any upgrades to infrastructure including subsurface infrastructure, bike or pedestrian accommodations, ADA / access upgrades on public property, additional open space improvements or any other physical improvement to the public realm that furthers the goals of SomerVision.